

SENATE

Exhibit No.

Date

Bill No.

J. Delaney

17

2/10/15

SB 202

Media Advisory: Disability Advocates Prepared To Oppose Flurry of State Assisted Suicide Bills Being Introduced in 2015

Posted: 15 Jan 2015 03:37 AM PST Summary: Disability rights advocates are preparing to work in broad coalition with medical and other groups that oppose legalization of assisted suicide, as proponents announce plans to introduce bills in several states in the wake of Brittany Maynard's tragic death. Representatives of Not Dead Yet, the Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund and Second Thoughts are available for interviews.

Brittany Maynard's personal story has ignited the debate around assisted suicide legalization. Most recently, Maynard's husband appeared in an interview alongside the president of Compassion & Choices, formerly the Hemlock Society, to push legalization. Disability advocates are deeply sympathetic to all people with a terminal illness, facing the difficulties that lie ahead. Legalization of assisted suicide can look acceptable and safe when the focus is solely on one individual. However, a closer examination of the issue reveals the immense harm legalization poses to vulnerable people, the elderly and society as a whole.

"If these bills pass, some people's lives will be ended without their consent, through mistakes and abuse," said Marilyn Golden, senior policy analyst with the Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund. *"No safeguards have ever been enacted or proposed that can prevent this outcome, which can never be undone."* Assisted suicide legislation was defeated last year in New Hampshire, Connecticut and Massachusetts by a broad coalition of disability rights organizations, medical associations and professionals, palliative care specialists, hospice workers and right to life groups. Similar coalitions are forming in many states in 2015 to oppose assisted suicide bills. The following individuals are disability rights advocates who are experts and active on the issue of assisted suicide and able to speak on the record.

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For more information, see "Who's Really Hurt by Assisted Suicide?" CNN, November 4, 2014.

Vote NO on SB 202 and YES on HB328 to close the door on euthanasia in Montana.